

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Hans F. Larsen

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING
SPEED LIMITS**

DATE: 08-12-10

Approved



Date

8/13/10

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution to repeal Resolution No. 74494 (Master Speed Limit Resolution) and establish a 15 mph school zone speed limit on Dana Avenue between Hester Avenue and Naglee Avenue in accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 22358.4.

OUTCOME

This action will establish a 15 mph school zone speed limit on Dana Avenue to provide for a lowered speed limit during school hours when children are present, for the approximate two-year period that the Trace Elementary campus will be located on both sides of Dana Avenue.

BACKGROUND

At the August 4, 2010 Rules Committee meeting, Councilmember Oliverio submitted a recommendation to create a 2 year pilot program to reduce the speed limit on Dana Avenue near Trace Elementary School, from 25 mph to 15 mph by implementing Assembly Bill 321. At this meeting, Department of Transportation (DOT) staff indicated support for the recommended reduction in the school zone speed limit at Trace Elementary due to the unusual condition associated with having a school campus located on both sides of Dana Avenue, and that children would be crossing the street throughout the school day at times not anticipated by motorists.

The California Vehicle Code (CVC), together with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD), provides direction to local and state agencies on the establishment of posted speed limits for a variety of roadways in the State. Generally, unless a prima facie speed limit has been identified in the CVC, agencies are required to conduct an engineering and traffic survey to justify the posted speed limit. Per the CVC, when speed limits are established based on engineering and traffic surveys, they must be adopted by ordinance or resolution. SJMC Section 11.28.010 specifies that speed limits will be established by resolution,

and is otherwise consistent with State law. For all roadways, the established speed limits are not effective until appropriate signs have been installed on the street providing notice to motorists.

Engineering and Traffic Surveys

There are approximately 500 roadway segments in the City that require engineering and traffic surveys. On June 24, 2008, the City Council adopted Resolution 74494 that updated speed limits on all surveyed streets in the City. These surveys need to be conducted in order to adjust or establish speed limits as set forth in CVC Sections 22357 and 22358, and to provide for the use of radar, or other electronic device, to enforce speed limits. For streets subject to radar enforcement, surveys must be updated every five (5), seven (7), or ten (10) years depending upon criteria outlined in CVC 40802. Surveys can be conducted more frequently if justified due to changes in land use or traffic conditions.

Local Streets and School Zone Prima Facie Speed Limit

CVC Sections 22352 and 40802 provide for a prima facie speed limit of 25 mph on local streets, and when approaching or passing school zones (up to 500 feet from the school grounds), without the need for an engineering and traffic survey. The 25 mph prima facie school zone speed limit is only in effect when children are present, which is generally when children are going to or leaving the school grounds in the morning or afternoon, or during the lunch recess period.

Assembly Bill 321

AB321 became effective January 2008 to allow local jurisdictions to extend the 25 mph prima facie speed limit (up to 1,000 feet from the school grounds), or to establish a 15 mph speed limit in school zones (up to 500 feet from the school grounds), under certain criteria. Specifically, the reduced or extended school zone speed limit is only applicable on streets in a residence district that have a maximum of two traffic lanes, and a maximum posted speed limit of 30 mph immediately prior to and after the school zone; and must be established for both directions of travel. Based on the requirements in CVC Section 22358.4 and the CAMUTCD, when determining the need to lower or extend the school zone speed limit, the provisions of CVC Section 627 that support the speed limit must be documented in an engineering study. Similar to the 25 mph school zone speed limit, per CVC Section 22358.4, a 15 mph school zone speed limit would only be effective when children are present.

Trace Elementary School

Trace Elementary School is located on Dana Avenue between Naglee Avenue and Brooklyn Avenue. On July 5, 2010, a building that housed 16 classrooms and the library at Trace Elementary were destroyed by fire. The school is scheduled to reopen on August 16, 2010 utilizing temporary portable classrooms, with grades 3-5 located in remaining classrooms on the school campus and grades K-2 located on the other side of Dana Avenue. It is expected school children will be crossing Dana Avenue between the school campus and the temporary portable classrooms during school hours.

ANALYSIS

CVC Section 627 requires the consideration of all of the following when completing an engineering and traffic survey: prevailing speeds (85th percentile speeds), accident records, and highway, traffic, and roadside conditions not readily apparent to the driver. A survey may also include consideration of residential density, and the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. With regards to establishing a lowered or extended school zone speed limit under the provisions of CVC Section 22358.4 and the CAMUTCD, prevailing speeds are not required to be the basis for the reduced or extended speed limit.

Dana Avenue Engineering and Traffic Survey

Dana Avenue, between Davis Street and San Carlos Street, is an approximate 1.2 mile roadway that functions as a neighborhood collector. Although Dana Avenue primarily provides access to residential properties, neighborhood schools and parks, it is identified as a Collector street on the Federal Highway Administration functional usage maps. Based on this, per CVC 40802, an engineering and traffic survey is required to justify the posted speed limit. The last survey for Dana Avenue was conducted in May 2003 re-establishing the 25 mph posted speed limit. More recently, DOT has completed an engineering study on Dana Avenue in the vicinity of Trace Elementary, based on the provisions of CVC Sections 627 and 22358.4. Based upon traffic data collected last year, there are about 3,200 vehicles per day traveling at an average speed of 22 mph, and an 85th percentile speed of about 28 mph in the vicinity of the school. During the morning and afternoon periods when children were arriving and leaving school, average speeds were much slower at around 15 mph, with the 85th percentile speed at around 19 mph. The occurrence of crashes during school hours has been low, with four crashes occurring in the past three years.

To compensate for the loss of multiple classrooms and the library, for an approximate two year period while replacement facilities are under construction, Trace Elementary classrooms will be located on both sides of Dana Avenue. During this time period, students, teachers and parents may be crossing Dana Avenue throughout the school day at times not regularly anticipated by motorists. This is a significant unusual condition that would not be readily apparent to motorists as they travel on Dana Avenue, especially those motorists unfamiliar with the neighborhood. Based upon this significant unusual condition, it is recommended that a 15 mph school zone speed limit be established on Dana Avenue between Hester Avenue and Naglee Avenue. Although Trace Elementary is located between Brooklyn Avenue and Naglee Avenue, as authorized by CVC 22358.4, if the 15 mph school zone was established to support Trace Elementary only, the reduced speed limit approaching Trace Elementary from the south would begin within the boundaries of the Lincoln High School campus. Extending the 15 mph school zone speed limit to include the entire frontage of Lincoln High School will provide for consistent, and less confusing, speed zoning and school zone signage on this segment of Dana Avenue.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

After construction of the replacement school building is complete and students have been relocated back to the Trace Elementary school site, DOT will reevaluate the school zone speed limit on Dana Avenue, in coordination with the Police Department, to assess whether changes in the speed limit should be made. Any recommended changes to the speed limit at that time would be brought forward to the City Council.

The 15 mph reduced school zone speed limit is proposed due to the unique conditions that will exist on Dana Avenue during the next two years. At this time, both departments do not have adequate resources to conduct a pilot study to determine whether it might be appropriate to implement the reduced 15 mph or extended 25 mph school zone at other schools in the City. With the Adoption of the FY10-11 Operating Budget, staff resources within the DOT Neighborhood Traffic Management Team were significantly reduced. Within the Police Department's Traffic Enforcement Unit, the model used to deploy enforcement resources was modified in response to a series of Citywide community meetings held in 2007 on the Traffic Calming program, to provide more resources to neighborhoods and schools via a strategic geographical approach. This new approach which has been well received by neighborhoods and schools would likely limit the resources that could be diverted to conduct special enforcement activities in school zones with modified speed limits.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Not applicable.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- ☐ **Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater; **(Required: Website Posting)**
- ☐ **Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- ☐ **Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the Council agenda.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Police Department and the City Attorney's Office.

08-11-10

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FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

Not applicable.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The installation of speed limit signs will incur a nominal cost and will be absorbed within the department's existing budget.

CEQA

Exempt, File No. PP10-113.

/s/

HANS F. LARSEN

Acting Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Laura Wells, Deputy Director of Transportation, at 975-3725.